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(An address delivered at Moscow on 24th September 1919).

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MOSCOW—December 1920.

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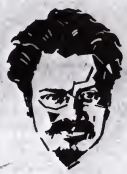

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An Interview with Leon Trotsky
Answer given to Views of Louis Fischer
(The Militant April 15, 1933.)

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(We are glad to print the following interview given in Prinkipo by Leon Trotsky to Comrade B.J.Field in connection with an article published several months ago by a bourgeois apologist of the Stalinist regime. as the interview deals with more then questions of a passing interest, it retains all its value as an exposition of the Bolshevic-Leninist standpoint on questions in dispute in the Communist movement. Ed.)

Lenin and Socialism in One Country

In the question of the United Front as well as in all broad questions of revolutionary tactics and strategy, the Left Opposition regards itself as continuing the authentic Bolshevik line, as against the efforts of the Stalinist faction to revise it in an empirical and bureaucratic manner.

This sense of the continuity of the revolution runs clearly through the answers that Trotsky gave to the writers questions on the issues of the principle which Mr. Fischer, following the Stalinist, takes for granted as having been decided against Trotsky's views.

Here are his answers:

Question: "Lenin and all his followers were convinced at that time (in 1917) that only a revolution abroad could save them from certain doom.. They did not hope to survive unless revolutions in Europe and Asia weakend external hostility and gave Red Russia a breathing space for domestic entrenchment, says Mr. Fischer, Was Lenin speaking only in an immediate military and political sense of saving Russia from defeat and subjegation, or did he have in mind the whole perspective of Russia's development on its own soil through the dictatorship of the proletariat to the ultimate Communist goal?"

Trotsky- "That affirmation of Mr. Fischer's like a series of others p proves his lack of familiarty with the theory and history of Bolshevism . In 1917 there was not a single Bolshevik who considered it possible the realization of a socialist society in a single country, and least of all in Russia. In the appendix 'History of the Russian Revolution' I give a detailed and documented study of the ideas of the Bolshevik party on the October revolution. This study, I hope, will make it impossible to ascribe to Lenin in the future the theory of socialism in a single country. Here I will limit myself to a single question, which in my opinion has a decisive character, Lenin died in January 1924; three months later Stalin expounded in writting Lenin's conception of the proletarian revolution. I quote word for word: 'to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to establish the power of the proletariat in a single country, still does not signify the full victory of socialism . The main task of socialism-the organization of socialist production-remains still in the future. Is it possible to fulfill this task, is it possible to achieve the definite victory of Socialism in one country without the combined efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries? No, it is impossible. For the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the efforts of one country are sufficient.- for this we have the testimony of the history of our revolution. For the definitive victory of Socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country especially a peasant country like Russia, are insufficient for that are required the efforts of of the proletarian of several advanced countries... Stalin closes the exposition of these ideas with the words, 'Such are the general characteristic features of Lenin's conception of

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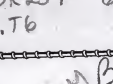

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THE TRUTH ABOUT TROTSKY

By

R. F. ANDREWS

C.P.G.B.

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THE KIROV ASSASSINATION

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If America Should

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SHOULD America go Communist as a result of the difficulties and problems which your capitalist social order is unable to solve, it will discover that Communism, far from being an intolerable bureaucratic tyranny and individual regimentation, will be the means of greater individual liberty and shared abundance.

At present most Americans regard Communism solely in the light of the experience of the Soviet Union. They fear lest Sovietism in America would produce the same material results as it has brought for the culturally backward peoples of the Soviet Union.

They fear lest Communism should try to fit them to a bed of Procrustes, and point to the bulwark of Anglo-Saxon conservatism as an insuperable obstacle even to possibly desirable reforms. They argue that Great Britain and Japan would undertake military intervention against the American Soviets. They shudder lest Americans be regimented in their habits of dress and diet; be compelled to subsist on famine rations; read stereotyped official propaganda in the newspapers; serve as rubber stamps for decisions arrived at without their active participation; keep their thoughts to themselves and loudly praise their Soviet leaders in public, through fear of imprisonment and exile.

"Don't believe a word of this," says James J. Davis, Former Secretary of Labor, whose answer will appear in Liberty next week.

They fear monetary inflation, bureaucratic tyranny, and intolerable red tape in obtaining the necessities of life. They fear soulless standardization in the arts and sciences, as well as in the daily necessities of life. They fear that all political spontaneity and the presumed freedom of the press will be destroyed by the dictatorship of a monstrous bureaucracy. And they shudder at the thought of being forced into an uncomprehended glibness in Marxian dialectic and disciplined social philosophies. They fear, in a word, that Soviet America will become the counterpart of what they have been told Soviet Russia looks like.

In fact American Soviets will be as different from the Russian Soviets as the United States of President Roosevelt differs from the Russian Empire of Czar Nicholas II. Yet Communism can come in America only through revolution, just as independence and democracy came in America. The American temperament is energetic and violent, and it will insist on breaking a good many dishes and upsetting a good many apple carts before Communism is firmly established. Americans are enthusiasts and sportsmen before they are specialists and statesmen, and it would be contrary to the American tradition to make a major change without choosing sides and cracking heads.

However, the American Communistic Revolution will be insignificant compared to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, in terms of your national wealth and population, no matter how great its comparative cost. That is because civil war of a revolutionary nature isn't fought by the handful of men at the top—the 5 or 10 per cent who own nine tenths of American wealth: this handful could recruit its counterrevolutionary armies only from among the lower middle classes. Even so, the revolution could easily attract them to its banner by showing that support of the Soviets alone offers them the prospect of salvation.

Everybody below this group is already economically prepared for Communism. The depression has ravaged your working classes and has dealt a crushing blow to the farmers, who had already been injured by the long agricultural decline of the postwar decade. There is no reason why these groups should oppose determined resistance to the revolution; they have nothing to lose, providing, of course, that the revolutionary leaders adopt a farsighted and moderate policy toward them.

Who else will fight against Communism? Your corporal's guard of billionaires and multimillionaires? Your Mellons, Morgans, Fords, and Rockefellers? They will cease struggling as soon as they fail to find other people to fight for them.

The American Soviet Government will take firm possession of the commanding heights of your business system: the banks, the key industries, and the transportation and communication systems. It will then give the farmers, the small tradespeople and business men a good long time to think things over and see how well the nationalized section of industry is working.

Here is where the American Soviets can produce real miracles. "Technocracy" can come true only under Communism, when the dead hands of private property rights and private profits are lifted from your industrial system. The most daring proposals of the Hoover commission on standardization and rationalization will seem childish compared to the new possibilities let loose by American Communism.

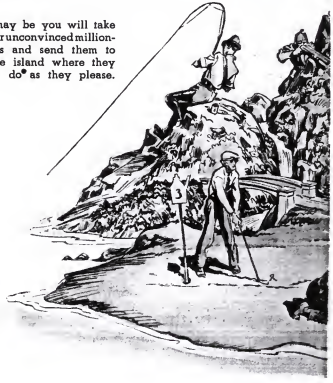
National industry will be organized along the line of the conveyer belt in your modern continuous-production automotive factories. Scientific planning can be lifted out of the individual factory and applied to your entire economic system. The results will be stupendous.

Costs of production will be cut to 20 per cent, or less, of their present figure. This in turn would rapidly increase your farmers' purchasing power.

To be sure, the American Soviets would establish their own gigantic farm enterprises, as schools of voluntary collectivization. Your farmers could easily calculate whether it was to their individual advantage to remain as isolated links or to join the public chain.

The same method would be used to draw small businesses and industries into the national organization of industry. By Soviet control of raw materials, credits, and quotas of

It may be you will take your unconvinced millionaires and send them to some island where they will do as they please.



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"TRUTH IS ON THE MARCH"

By JOHN DEWEY

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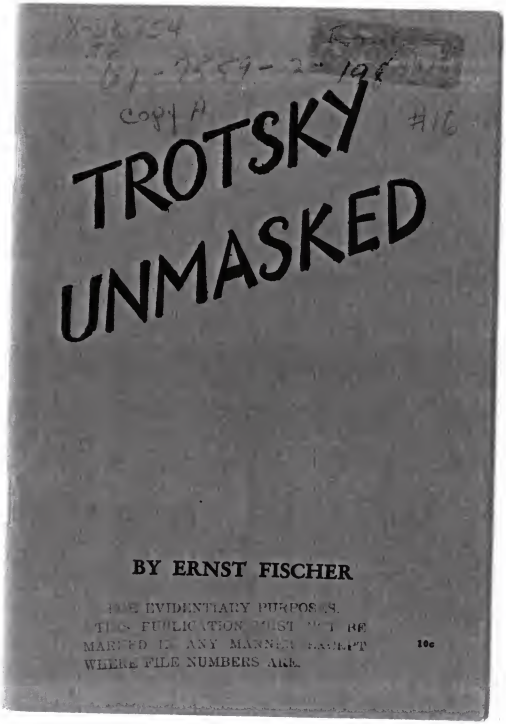
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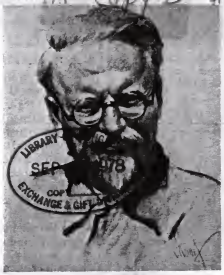

I stake my life!

By Leon Trotsky

Trotsky's Address to the N. Y. Hippodrome Meeting

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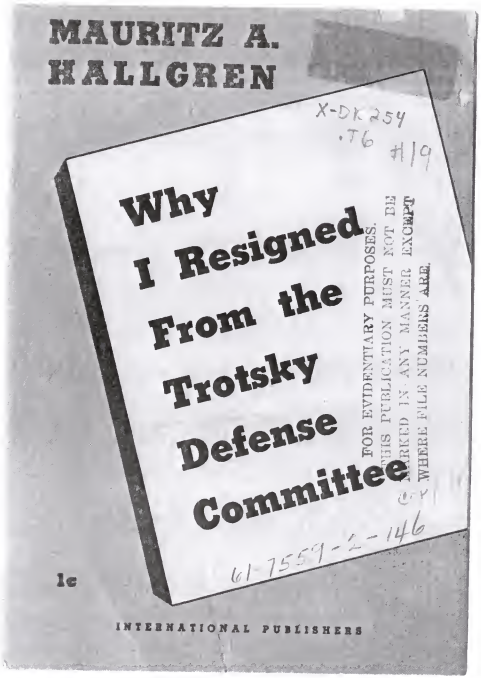

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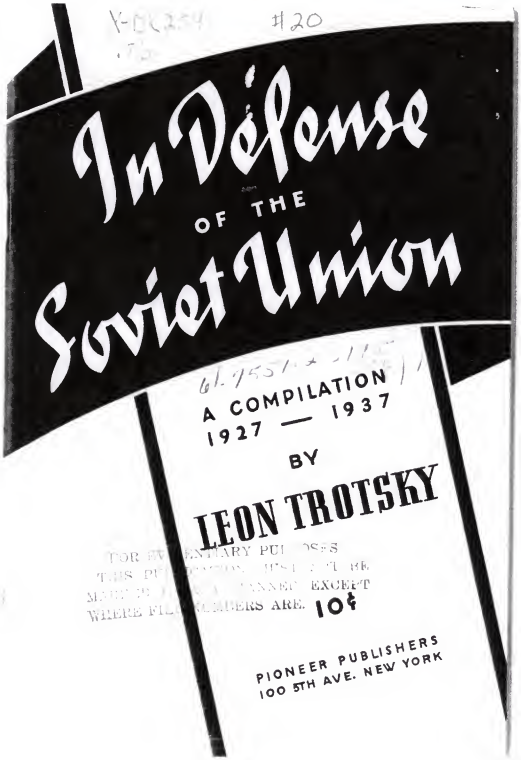
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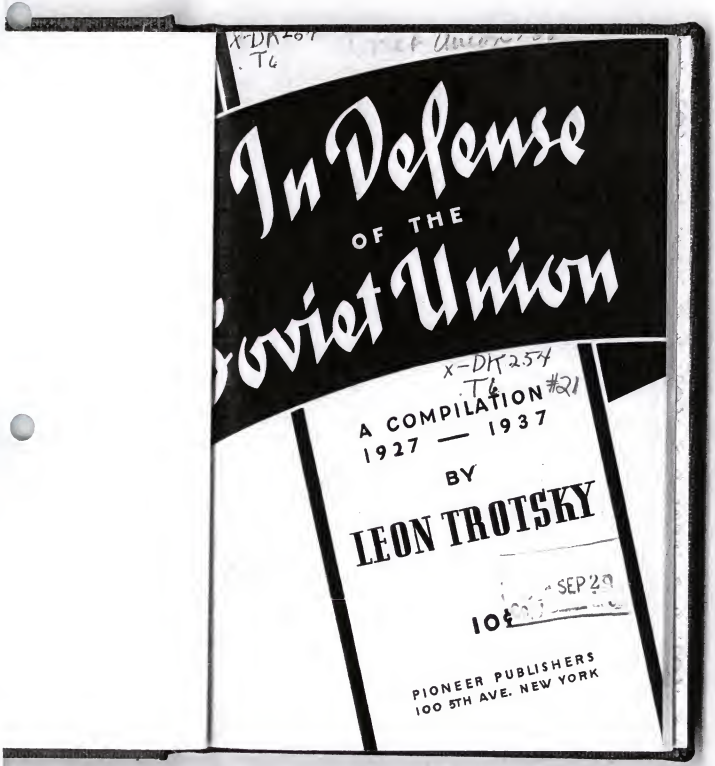
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NEWS BULLETIN

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF LEON TROTSKY

22 East 17th Street, Room 511, New York City — Telephone: GRamercy 7-8025

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This Committee Exists (1) *To Safeguard Trotsky's Right to Asylum and* (2) *to join in the Organization of an Impartial Commission of Inquiry.*

BULLETIN No. 2. — 357 — JANUARY 27, 1937

For an Impartial Commission of Inquiry!

For an Impartial Commission of Inquiry!

To the millions of workers and honest liberals all over the world bewildered, confused and demoralised by the succession of trials in Moscow, this is the one demand that holds forth some ray of clarification and release from the doubts and questions these trials have aroused everywhere.

Let a group of prominent figures, drawn from liberal and labor ranks, of unimpeachable integrity, weigh all the evidence, hear the testimony of those witnesses who have not yet been heard, and come to a conclusion that the whole world will be able to comprehend.

Leon Trotsky, the chief defendant in these trials, has repeatedly offered to appear before such a commission, to lay before it the documentary record of his whole political career. Only in this way will he get the day in court to which he is entitled.

In support of this demand committees have come into existence in Europe, similar in composition and purpose to the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. The demand for a commission has been issued independently but supported by such organisations as the Socialist Party U.S.A., Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, the C.N.T. and [illegible] of Spain, the Queensland Federation of Iron Workers of Australia, the Seine Socialist Youth of France, The Bund and the Central Labor Union Committee of Poland, the Socialist Workers Party of Germany and others.

In England the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky included H. Brailsford, J. F. Horrabin, of the Socialist League, Rowland Hill, chairman of the Bradford Trades Council, Conrad Noel, Stuart Purkiss of the Railway Employes' Union, Irene Rathbone, and others.

In France the Committee of Inquiry into the Moscow Trial and For the Defense of Freedom of Opinion in the Revolution has issued a commission appeal signed by Andre Breton, Jules Romains, Felicien Challaye, Maurice Dommanget, Goodchaux-Munnenrgg, Marcel Martinet, Georges Michon, Pierre Monatte, Magdeleine rau, Georges Pioch, Henri Poulaille, Alfred Rosmer, Victor-Serge, Georges Dumouuin, Leon Werth, Victor Margueritte, and more than a score of others with special statements issued by Gaston Bergery, Georges Izard, and others.

A Committee of nearly 100 leading intellectuals and labor figures has been organized in Czechosiovakia. Other committees exist in Canada, Australia, Denmark.

The American Committee, of which only a partial list appears on top of this bulletin, is taking active steps to further the formation of the proposed Commission.

These committees call unitedly upon all liberals, progressives and labor militants to support the formation of this commission, morally and materially.

Send in your contribution to the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, Room 511, 22 East 17 Street, New York City.

Let the truth be known! For a Commission of Inquiry!

CAPITAL NEWSMEN DEFEND ROMM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26—Twelve leading Washington correspondents called on Soviet Ambassador Troyanovsky today and told him they would not believe the guilt of their former colleague, Vladimir Romm, of Isvestia, who is supposed to have acted as intermediary between Leon Trotsky and Karl Radek, and upon whose testimony the whole "case" against Leon Trotsky depends.

Romm "confessed," but the Washington newspapermen refused to credit the "confession." "In view of our experience with him," they told Troyanovsky, "it will be extremely difficult for us to believe he is guilty of any deliberate act of disloyalty to the Soviet government."

For a Day in Court

By LEON TROTSKY

(*These telegraphed statements appeared in the Manchester Guardian on Jan. 25 and 26*)

MEXICO CITY, Jan. 25—It is unnecessary to state that since 1928 I have had no relations whatever with Radek and Piatakov, who have periodically insulted me in the official press. Piatakov never visited me in Oslo and I have never been to Oslo except in company with the Knudsen family and my own secretaries. I have never known Vladimir Romm, who is alleged to have played the part of intermediary between myself and Radek. I have abundant documentary evidence to prove the impossibility of any meeting or personal relations between myself and the men who are now accused in Moscow.

I shall bring forth this evidence in a book I am at present writing on the crimes committed by the G.P.U. It is difficult to put my case to the public at a moment's notice but there are two or three fundamental questions which neither State Prosecutor Vishinsky nor his distinguished defender, D. N. Pritt, will be able to evade.

First, how can one accept the fact that all the men who carried through the revolution, with one exception, Stalin, have become terrorists, enemies of socialism, agents of the Gestapo, ready to dismember the U.S.S.R.?

Second, how is that these "criminals," who for nearly ten years have been committing terrible crimes can suddenly repent and after having demanded death for others, suddenly demand it for themselves?

Third, how is one to explain that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and other leaders of this alleged 'Trotskyist' group, have nothing about this grotesque plan to dismember the U.S.S.R. for the benefit of Hitler and the Mikado, while Radek, whom none of us ever took seriously, suddenly reveals himself at the head of a world conspiracy?

If there is any conspiracy, it is the conspiracy of the G.P.U. If there is any leader, his name is Stalin. Stalin's militarist dictatorship has come into ever more serious conflict with the economic and cultural development of the country. He is the embodiment of the bureaucracy. The spirit of daring which he learned in the school of the revolution is now applied only to maintain his own omnipotence and his own privileges by methods that are fantastic in criminal ingenuity.

This last trial shows that a terrible political crisis is approaching in Russia.

I am ready to denounce Stalin before any impartial and authoritative international commission. I make this appeal to all men of good will and to all that section of the press which is honest and independent and I know full well that the Manchester Guardian will be one of the first to serve the truth and humanity.

MEXICO CITY, Jan. 26—The charges in the present Moscow trial are framed with one object—that of exploiting international relations in order to suppress internal enemies. Stalin has invented nothing new. He is merely repeating several previous cases in an exaggerated form.

It is alleged, for instance, that in 1935 I wrote through Vladimir Romm (ex-correspondent of Isvestia in Washington) of whom I have never heard, to Bullitt with whom I have had no relations since 1923, telling him it was necessary to restore the capitalist system in the Soviet Union.

But this is exactly what is being done by the new aristocracy of which Stalin is the head. Stalin is therefore merely trying to attribute to me through the person of Radek the very policy which I publicly accuse him of putting into practice.

For a fuller statement of this see my last book, "The Revolution Betrayed," already published in France, and which will soon appear in English.

Then it is also alleged that I insisted in secret letters which cannot be seen, that German and American capital should be admitted to Russia. In actual fact, I urged in the press at the

NEWS BULLETIN

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF LEON TROTSKY

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This Committee Exists (1) To Safeguard Trotsky's Right to Asylum and (2) to further the Organization of an Impartial Commission of Inquiry.

Bulletin No. 4. — FEBRUARY 19, 1937 — 357 — Five Cents

Commission Demands Supported by 6,500

Nearly 6,500 people jammed the New York Hippodrome on Tuesday night, Feb. 9 for what proved to be one of the most impressive labor defense meetings this city has ever seen.

The great crowd had come to hear Trotsky speak over a direct telephone wire from Mexico City. For reasons not yet satisfactorily explained by the telephone company officials, the wire circuit at the last minute failed to function and Trotsky was unable to speak as scheduled.

While attempts were being made to get a line through the crowd waited patiently for nearly an hour. Trotsky's speech, an analysis of the trials and an appeal for a commission of inquiry, was read by Max Shachtman, editor of Trotsky's works in this country.

Trotsky's challenging offer to place himself at the disposal of the Moscow authorities should an impartial commission find him guilty of any of the charges levelled at him in Moscow made a profound impression on the audience. From the crowded press table at the Hippodrome word of the challenge went out to the farthest corners of the world.

(The text of Trotsky's speech has been published by Pioneer Publishers, New York, under the title: "I Stake My Life".)

Other speakers on the program included Max Shachtman, who denounced as reactionary the Communist Party's attempt to deny Trotsky the free and democratic right of asylum; Angelica Balabanoff, first secretary of the Communist International; Roy Burt, national executive secretary of the Socialist Party, U.S.A.; George Novack, secretary of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky; and Prof. Emmett E. Dorsey, acting head of the Political Science Department of Howard University, who acted as chairman.

Endorsing the demand for an impartial commission of inquiry, Roy Burt said: "We stand or fall together. There is no hope or future for the workers of the world unless all suspicion of frame-up, all doubt of justice, is divorced from the attitude of the Soviet Union."

At the close of the meeting, with a few scattered nays, the thousands present adopted the following resolution:

> "Human progress being indivisibly one with the truth, we, 6,500 New York workers and friends of civil liberties assembled in the Hippodrome on the call of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, endorse the proposal to create an impartial commission of inquiry into the truth of the charges made against Leon Trotsky at the Moscow trials. We appeal to enlightened public opinion in the United States and abroad to add its voice to ours and we call especially on the trade union movement to take the immediate initiative toward the creation of such a commission of inquiry, on whose decisions Trotsky has staked his honor and his life."

Trotsky's Challenge

"Why does Moscow so fear the voice of a single man? Only because I know the truth, the whole truth. Only because I have nothing to hide. Only because I am ready to appear before a public and impartial commission of inquiry with documents, facts and testimonies in my hands, and to disclose the truth to the very end. I declare: if this commission decides that I am guilty in the slightest degree of the crimes which Stalin imputes to me, I PLEDGE IN ADVANCE TO PLACE MYSELF VOLUNTARILY IN THE HANDS OF THE EXECUTIONERS OF THE GPU."

From Trotsky's speech, read at the Hippodrome meeting, New York, February 9, 1937

Mass Meetings on Trials Held in Many Cities

Meetings on the Moscow trials and in support of the demand for a commission of inquiry have been held during the past few weeks in New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, Boston, Minneapolis, and San Francisco and Paris, France.

On Feb. 2 in Paris more than 3,000 workers met and heard a list of speakers including Magdeleine Paz, Georges Pioch, Felicien Challaye, representatives of the Socialist Youth, of the Workers Internationalist Party, and M. Arker, delegate of the Workers Party of Marxist Unification of Spain. Messages were read from Victor Marguerite and Georges Duhamel. Andre Breton, novelist and writer, read a message from Victor Serge.

On Feb. 12 in Boston a meeting of about 700 persons took place under the auspices of the New England Sub-Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. Max Shachtman, editor of Trotsky's works, George Novack, Secretary of the American Committee; and John Newton Thurber, business manager of the Socialist Call, were the speakers. Part of Leon Trotsky's Hippodrome speech was read.

In Chicago on Feb. 1, nearly 1,000 were present to hear Norman Thomas, Socialist Party leader, and Albert Goldman, editor of the Socialist Appeal, in an analysis of the Moscow trials and demands for the formation of an impartial commission of inquiry.

A special 800-word telegraphed message from Leon Trotsky, in which he repeated his offer to place himself at the disposal of the G.P.U. if found guilty by a commission of inquiry, was read and cheered by the meeting.

In Montreal on Feb. 12 at the Youth Forum of the Workmen's Circle, more than 500 persons heard Maurice Spector, former member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, discuss the trials. More than 100 were turned away. Next day a meeting of more than 100 was held at the Coffee House to plan further activities.

Committee Answers Counter-Campaign

The American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky was launched in provisional form on October 22, 1936, by two leading Socialists and four eminent liberals who have often aided in the defense of the oppressed and persecuted. Their appeal met with immediate response from more than two-score liberals, socialists, trade-unionists and others. The Committee made its first appearance before the general public when it undertook to secure for Trotsky the democratic right of asylum in Mexico. A number of liberal papers commented in friendly fashion on the committee's work. The Socialist Party of the U.S. gave it official endorsement. A number of trade-unions added their approval. At the Committee's first public meeting in New York on Dec. 18, more than 2,500 people were present in the Hotel Delano.

From the outset, the Communist Party, its organs, its auxiliary organizations, and its official and unofficial spokesmen attacked the Committee. Their attacks increased in volume and intensity when the Soviet Embassy added its voice. On Jan. 20, Mr. Mauritz Hallgren of the Baltimore Sun sent the Committee a 3,000 word letter of resignation, at the same time as he sent it to the Daily Worker. The "war of the letters" had begun.

The Communist Party and its friends made the following accusations against the Committee:

(1) That it is composed of Trotskyists;

(2) That it is composed of liberal marionettes and Trotskyists who pull the strings;

(3) That its object is to destroy the Soviet Union in order to help Fascism;

(4) That its object is to agitate for "meaningless justice", thus objectively helping Hitler, Hearst and the Japanese Mikado in their anti-Soviet plans.

The Communist Party and its friends, basing themselves on these arguments, have employed the following methods in an attempt to break up the Committee:

(1) A steady barrage of propaganda in the Communist-controlled press;

(2) Pressure on liberal editors to close the pages of their papers to expressions of the Committee and its members;

(3) Individual letters to Committee members presenting the C.P. arguments and urging resignations;

(4) A letter signed by several dozen C.P. supporters and liberals urging all Committee members to resign. (This letter is peculiarly disingenuous. It condemns the Committee's aim of establishing an impartial commission of inquiry, and disposes of the other aim of the Committee by stating that Trotsky now has asylum in Mexico and that therefore the asylum issue is dead. It conceals the fact that neither when he was seeking asylum in Mexico nor now when the Mexican C.P. is demanding that Trotsky be deported—where to?—have any of the signers of the anti-Committee letters

(*Continued on Page 2*)

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FOR AN IMPARTIAL COMMISSION!

NEWS BULLETIN

LET THE TRUTH BE KNOWN!

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF LEON TROTSKY

22 East 17th Street, Room 1435, New York City — Telephone: GRamercy 7-6011

GEORGE NOVACK, Secretary — SUZANNE LAFOLLETTE, Treasurer

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#24

This Committee Exists (1) To Safeguard Trotsky's Right to Asylum and (2) to further the Organization of an Impartial Commission of Inquiry.

Bulletin No. 5. — MARCH 16, 1937 — 357 — One Cent

Towards An Impartial Commission Of Inquiry For Leon Trotsky!

AN EDITORIAL

A NEW political trial is impending in Moscow—the third great trial in less than a year! (There have been scores of identical lesser trials throughout the Soviet Union.) This time the chief defendants are the old Bolsheviks, Nicholai Bukharin, until yesterday editor of **Izvestia**, and Alexei Rykov, Lenin's successor as President of the Council of People's Commissars. It can be predicted with perfect assurance that, as in the former trials, they will confess, and that their confessions will accuse Leon Trotsky of the most horrible crimes.

Trotsky on March 10th declared to the press that "there is only one way of preventing new judicial assassinations": to give him the opportunity of appearing before an impartial Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against him and his son at the Moscow trials. He has repeatedly demanded a hearing before such a Commission. He has staked his life and his honor upon its decisions.

This Commission of Inquiry should be composed of individuals of unassailable authority and integrity in the eyes of liberal and labor opinion. It would have as its task the examination of all the available evidence concerning the charges made against Trotsky and his son. The decisions of this Commission could not but dispel much of the doubt and mystery enveloping the Moscow trials.

There are two kinds of opponents of such a Commission as we advocate. First, the Communist Party and its most open supporters, who demand that everyone accept the Moscow verdicts as final and unimpeachable. So far as these people are concerned, the trials are a closed question.

Since, however, the overwhelming majority of labor and liberal opinion the world over refused to accept the trials at their face valne, and the movement for an impartial Commission of Inquiry is gaining more and more adherents, another form of opposition to the formation of the proposed Commission is manifesting itself; projects for specious substitutes, utterly alien and opposed to the task imposed upon us by the trials of establishing the **objective truth** regarding the accusations against Trotsky and his son.

Two such "substitutes" have just come to light: one initiated by Fenner Brockway, Secretary of the British Independent Labor Party, and the other by the editors of the **New Republic**. We deal with them in detail below. Here we simply warn our friends that, the open and direct campaign to smash the Committee and to distort its purposes having

(*Continued on Page* 2)

Committee R[...] New Substitut[...]es

[...]iderations [...]r to safeg[...] [...]e right of as[...] [...]ver, in view of [...] [...]arily offered [...] to the [...]mission [...]ade against [...] fact that such [...] practical way of [...]rsy which threatens [...] forces opposed to [...]al and social reaction, [...] to bring

Two new projects of oppos[...] proposed Commission of In[...] light this week:

1. We learned f[...] source that the N[...] cepts the official [...] trials and pronoc[...] Inquiry as "unlik[...] any value if it were," now has retained a single attorney to make an examination of the trial proceedings. Acting on this information, Suzanne La Follette communicated with Bruce Bliven, editor of the New Republic, and elicited a confirmation. Miss La Follette's subsequent letter to Mr. Bliven illumines the situation thoroughly. We quote the letter in full:

Dear Mr. Bliven:

I wish to make a record of your statements to me in our telephone conversation today, and to let you have in writing, for publication if you wish, some comments on the New Republic's relation to the questions raised by the Moscow trials.

You stated that the New Republic has retained an attorney, name not mentioned, to examine the official proceedings of the Zinoviev-Kamenev and the Radek-Piatakov trials. You denied that the New Republic is planning a general inquiry into the charges made against Trotsky in these two trials. You stated that the attorney's analysis was being made for the New Republic's own use, "perhaps not for publication." You stated that the New Republic did not plan, as part of this analysis, to go to Trotsky for his side of the case. You agreed that a one-man analysis of the proceedings would not be comparable in thoroughness or effectiveness to the work of a Commission of Inquiry.

I have a few comments to make on this plan of the New Republic:

(*Continued on Page* 2)

COMMITTEE ASKS OBSERVERS AT NEW MOSCOW TRIAL

The American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky has asked the Soviet Government for the right to send observers to the impending trial of Nikolai Bukharin and Alexis Rykoff in Moscow. The request was embodied in a communication to Alexander Troyanovsky, Soviet Ambassador.

The Committee declared that a precedent for its request had been set in the Moscow trials of August, 1936, and of last January, when the Soviet Government "showed sufficient awareness of public opinion abroad to invite foreign observers of the government's own choosing."

"Moreover," the Committee's letter to Mr. Troyanovsky stated, "the Soviet Government, as evidenced by the timely presence of these gentlemen in Moscow, apprised them of the impending trials in ample time."

The Committee therefore asked that it be notified in advance of the date of the trial, and that the Soviet Government guarantee the safety of the observers and grant them the right to be accompanied by stenographers, to use telephonic and telegraphic communications freely, and to interview the prisoners privately.

The letter declared that the Committee, "seriously concerned with the maintenance throughout the civilized world of the rights of political asylum, the right to a fair trial without public prejudgment, and other civil liberties, came into being as a result of widespread doubt among pro-Soviet circles in America as to the validity and adequacy of the procedure and verdict" in last August's trials.

"These doubts," the communication added, "were moreover increased and deepened as a result of the next case tried before the Military Collegium in January."

"It is clear from the record of this Committee that it is composed of staunch friends of the Soviet Union. In the interests of the U.S.S.R. itself, the Committee seeks to clarify an issue thickly befogged by polemics.

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NEWS BULLETIN

LET THE TRUTH BE KNOWN!

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF LEON TROTSKY

22 East 17th Street, Room 1435, New York City

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8011-2

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Charles Erskine Scott Wood
Helen Woodward
W. E. Woodward
and others

This Committee Exists (1) *To Safeguard Trotsky's Right to Asylum and* (2) *to further the Organization of an Impartial Commission of Inquiry.*

Bulletin No. 6 MAY 3, 1937 One Cent

Trotsky's Defense Presented At Mexican Hearings

By GEORGE NOVACK

THE hearings recently conducted in Mexico City by the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry, headed by John Dewey, at which Leon Trotsky testified in his own defense constituted an unprecedented historical event. Whenever before has a group of distinguished foreigners had to journey three thousand miles to afford a hearing to a political exile, a man without a country, charged with the gravest crimes, who had no other means of presenting his case to the world? President Cardenas, on his part, sent a warm telegram to the chairman opening the doors of Mexico to the commission. Such a genuine example of internationalism and democracy is rare in our day!

The unique character of the occasion, arising out of Trotsky's extraordinary situation, has created some confusion in the public mind, which has been craftily exploited by those who have opposed this attempt to throw all possible light on the Moscow trials. For those whose interest in the Mexican hearings was by no means satisfied by the fragmentary and distorted press reports, it would perhaps be useful to emphasize the essential facts in the case as we survey the scene of the hearings.

The Setting

Since the Mexican Communist Party had issued statements threatening direct action against Trotsky if he dared appear in public, the Commission decided to hold the sessions in the red and blue villa of Diego Rivera at Coyoacan, where Trotsky has found refuge. A cordon of police guarded the double entrance to the courtyard of the house; the windows of the "courtroom" were boarded up and barricaded with adobe bricks; everyone who entered, commissioners included, were searched for concealed weapons.

At a small table on the left sat Leon Trotsky, leader with Lenin of the October Revolution, organizer of the Red Army, today the world's most famous exile. He was flanked by two secretaries, who were kept busy hunting citations, tracking down references, and singling out documents from the mass of material in front of them. Facing them on the opposite side of the room was Albert Goldman of Chicago, Trotsky's attorney.

Trotsky is the principal accused in the Moscow trials. He has been "convicted" *in absentia* of the most monstrous crimes against the Soviet state. The most prominent of his old colleagues in Lenin's Central Committee, having "confessed" to these crimes, have been shot. Nevertheless, he has declared his absolute innocence of all the charges against him and branded the trials "the greatest frameup in history." Again and again he has sought an impartial official court in which to present his case. In Norway and Mexico he challenged the Soviet government to request his extradition; they refused to do so. (When Commissioner Beals, on the first day of the hearings, cast doubts on his good faith in this matter because of the lack of diplomatic relations between Mexico and the U.S.S.R., he immediately offered to go to any country where he can stand trial on extradition proceedings.)

His First Opportunity

Finally he had been forced to call for an international commission of inquiry, composed of authoritative and impartial individuals, which would give him his day in court. "If this commission decides that I am guilty in the slightest degree of the crimes which Stalin imputes to me," he had declared in his Hippodrome speech, "I pledge in advance to place myself voluntarily in the hands of the executioners of the GPU." Now, before this preliminary commission, he was given his first opportunity to present his case before the bar of world opinion.

The commissioners were seated around a long green-cloth covered table at the front of the room. The Chairman was John Dewey, America's great philosopher and educator, an old and staunch friend of the Soviet Union. The secretary, Suzanne La Follette, former editor of "The New Freeman," Benjamin Stolberg, the noted labor journalist, Otto Ruhle, the former German Socialist deputy and biographer of Karl Marx, and, for the first five days, Carleton Beals, the well-known writer on Latin America, comprised the rest of the commission. John Finerty, Tom Mooney's lawyer, served as counsel to the commission.

Separated by wooden railings from the participants in the hearings and crowded together at two tables stretching from wall to wall were the representatives of the press. In addition to the regular Mexican and American newspaper men, there were special correspondents from the Norwegian, French, English, North and South American papers, a weighty index to the importance attributed to the hearings.

Unions Represented

Behind them sat an audience of thirty-five or forty invited guests of the commission. Among them were official envoys of six Mexican labor organizations with translators by their sides, an observer from the League of Nations, members of the American Committee, etc. Telegrams of support for the work of the commission were received from many Mexican and American labor organizations as well as from the Socialist Party of the United States.

In New York the Commission had invited the Soviet government through Ambassador Troyanovsky, the American Communist Party, and Joseph Brodsky, noted Communist lawyer, to be present at the hearings with full power to cross-examine Trotsky. In Mexico City they extended similar invitations to the Mexican Communist Party and to Lombardo Toledano, the labor leader, who is the most vociferous opponent of Trotsky's asylum in Mexico. None accepted. The Communists instead contrived to introduce observers into the audience by means of false credentials.

Dewey's Opening

"I HAVE given my life to the work of education which I have conceived to be that of public enlightenment in the interests of society. If I finally accepted the responsible post I now occupy, it was because I realized that to act otherwise would be to be false to my life work."

With these impressive words John Dewey as chairman opened the sessions. He had stated that the Commission had no illusions concerning the extraordinarily difficult nature of its task and was aware that every stage of its investigation would be beset by bitter controversy.

The campaign to discredit the Commission had been launched even before its arrival. Hostile correspondents, echoing the Communist press, had written that the Commission was coming to "whitewash" Trotsky. Kluckhohn of the N. Y. Times had invented statements by Trotsky's attorney purporting to prove that the Commissioners had been "fixed" in advance. Dr. Dewey refuted this calumny by explaining that the preliminary commission was neither a court nor a jury. Its function was simply

(*Continued on page 3*)

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American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky

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and others
GEORGE NOVACK
Secretary

Dear Friend:

Recently 3500 workers and friends heard the report of the Preliminary Commission which took testimony from Leon Trotsky and others in Mexico. The report and speech of Chairman John Dewey is enclosed.

Sub-Commission hearings are going on in Paris and will soon begin in New York. Depositions and documents necessary for the consideration of the full Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow charges are being gathered.

The verbatim report of the Mexican hearings must be published so that everyone may read Trotsky's case, and see how thorough the Mexican Inquiry was. In the light of recent Soviet developments, this undertaking is more imperative than ever.

Harper & Brothers will publish the 600-page transcript of the Mexican hearings - provided the Committee purchase 2,000 copies in advance. We must act immediately, and to do so must have your aid.

Moreover, we must give financial aid to the Paris and New York Sub-Commissions. Major tasks lie before us. We need not less than $5,000 in order to

1. EFFECT PUBLICATION OF THE RECORD OF HEARINGS BEFORE THE PRELIMINARY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY AT COYOACAN, MEXICO.

2. EFFECT COMPLETION OF THE PARIS AND NEW YORK HEARINGS.

3. MAKE POSSIBLE THE SESSIONS OF THE FULL INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION IN NEW YORK IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

Whether or not we bring to a speedy completion the historic task which we took on our shoulders - a task whose importance obviously increases daily - depends on the support of our members and of our many friends.

"Truth is on the march, and nothing can stop it." Certainly financial difficulties must not do so.

We urge you to send immediate aid. Do so by mailing the enclosed card to us at once.

Sincerely yours,

George Novack

GEORGE NOVACK
Secretary

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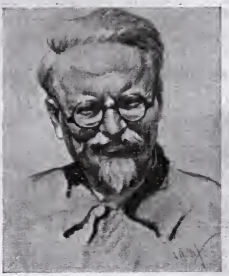

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X CORRESPONDENCE WITH COMRADE TROTSKY

New York City
January 24, 1940

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Dear Comrade Trotsky:

I have disregarded in the past a number of false statements, but I note, among other things, in your open letter to Comrade Burnham the following:

> "In reaction to my previous article, Comrade Abern, it has been reported, remarked: 'This means split.' Such a response merely demonstrates that Abern lacks devotion to the Party and the Fourth International; he is a circle man."

This report is false; that is, it is a lie. May I inquire the source of your information and whether you made any effort to check its veracity?

Fraternally yours,

Martin Abern

January 29, 1940

Dear Comrade Abern:

I received the communication about your alleged expression "This means split" from Comrade Cannon. He wrote on December 28th, 1939:

> Your document has already been widely distributed in the party. So far I have heard only two definite comments from leaders of the minority. Abern, after he had read the title and the first few paragraphs, remarked to Goldman, "This means split."

I know Cannon as a trustworthy comrade and I didn't have the slightest reason to doubt the veracity of his communication.

You say this report "is a lie." I know by a long experience that during the sharp fight, misunderstandings of such a kind are very often without bad will from one side or the other.

You ask me whether I made any effort to check the veracity of this report. None at all. If I had spread it in private

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Introduction by ALBERT GATES

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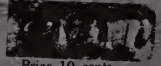

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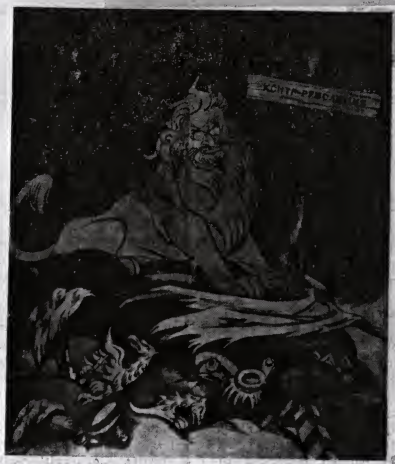

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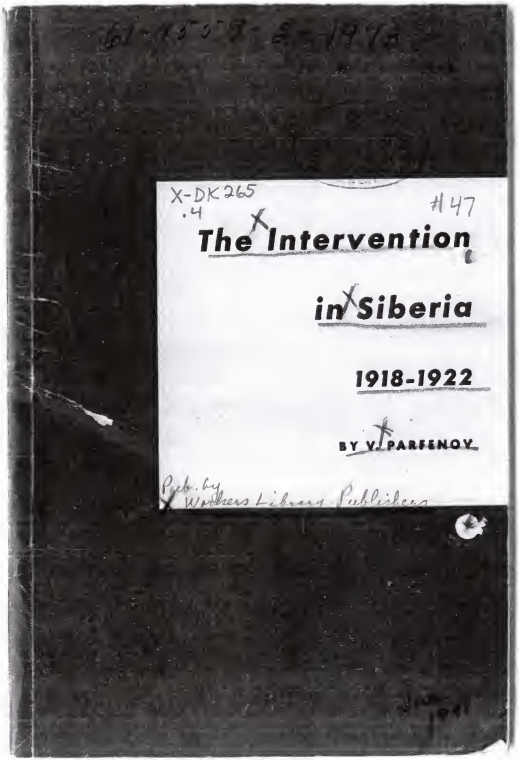
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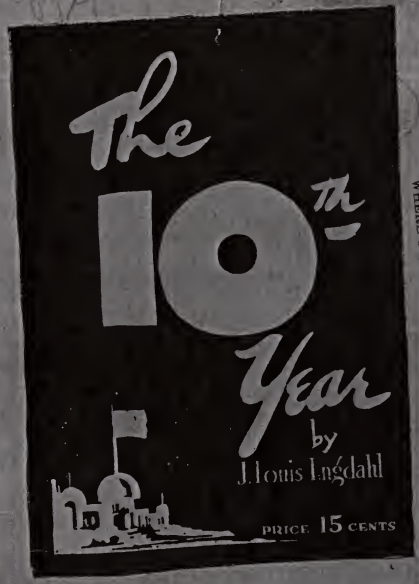

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